

Appl. No. 10/701,845
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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior listings and versions of the claims.

1. (Currently Amended): A method for preparing a concentrated inoculating composition for use with leguminous plants, comprising the following steps in the order given:

- a) a culture medium suitable for supporting the growth of *Rhizobium Japonicum* bacteria is sterilized and cooled;
- b) *Rhizobium Japonicum* bacteria is added to the culture medium and allowed to multiply for 46 hours at a temperature preferably of 28 C;
- c) The result of the two previous steps is cooled to a temperature of 10 or 11 C;
- d) a solution comprising powdered maltose saccharide, liquid maltose saccharide, lactose saccharide, and potassium sorbate is added to the combined culture medium and bacteria, said solution being prepared by the following steps:
 - 1) dissolving said powdered maltose saccharide, said liquid maltose saccharide, and said potassium sorbate in 100 liters of water;
 - 2) Sterilization at 121 C for 30 minutes;
 - 3) Cooling to 20 C.

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2. (Previously Presented): The method for preparing a concentrated inoculating composition as described in claim 1, further comprising the step of incorporating, prior to step a), 5 to 20% peat by weight which has been treated in accordance with the following steps:

- I) Heating the peat with distilled water at 100 C for forty minutes;
- II) Transferring 10% of the final volume of the peat of step I to a fermenting unit where the culture medium is to be prepared and where are added the rest of the chemicals which comprise the culture medium;
- III) Adjusting the pH to between about 6.9 to about 7.0.

3. (Previously Presented): A concentrated inoculating composition for use with leguminous plants, produced by the method described in claim 1.

4. (Previously Presented): A composition as described in claim 3, characterized in that it comprises by weight 5 to 20% peat previously treated in accordance with the following steps:

- I) Heating the peat with distilled water at 100 C for forty minutes;

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- II) Transferring 10% of the peat of step I in the final volume to the fermenting unit where the culture medium is to be prepared and where are added the rest of the chemicals which comprise the culture medium;
- III) Adjusting the pH to between about 6.9 to about 7.0.

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